



Ratings and Emotional Labour among Consumers in the Sharing Economy: A Mixed-Methods Study

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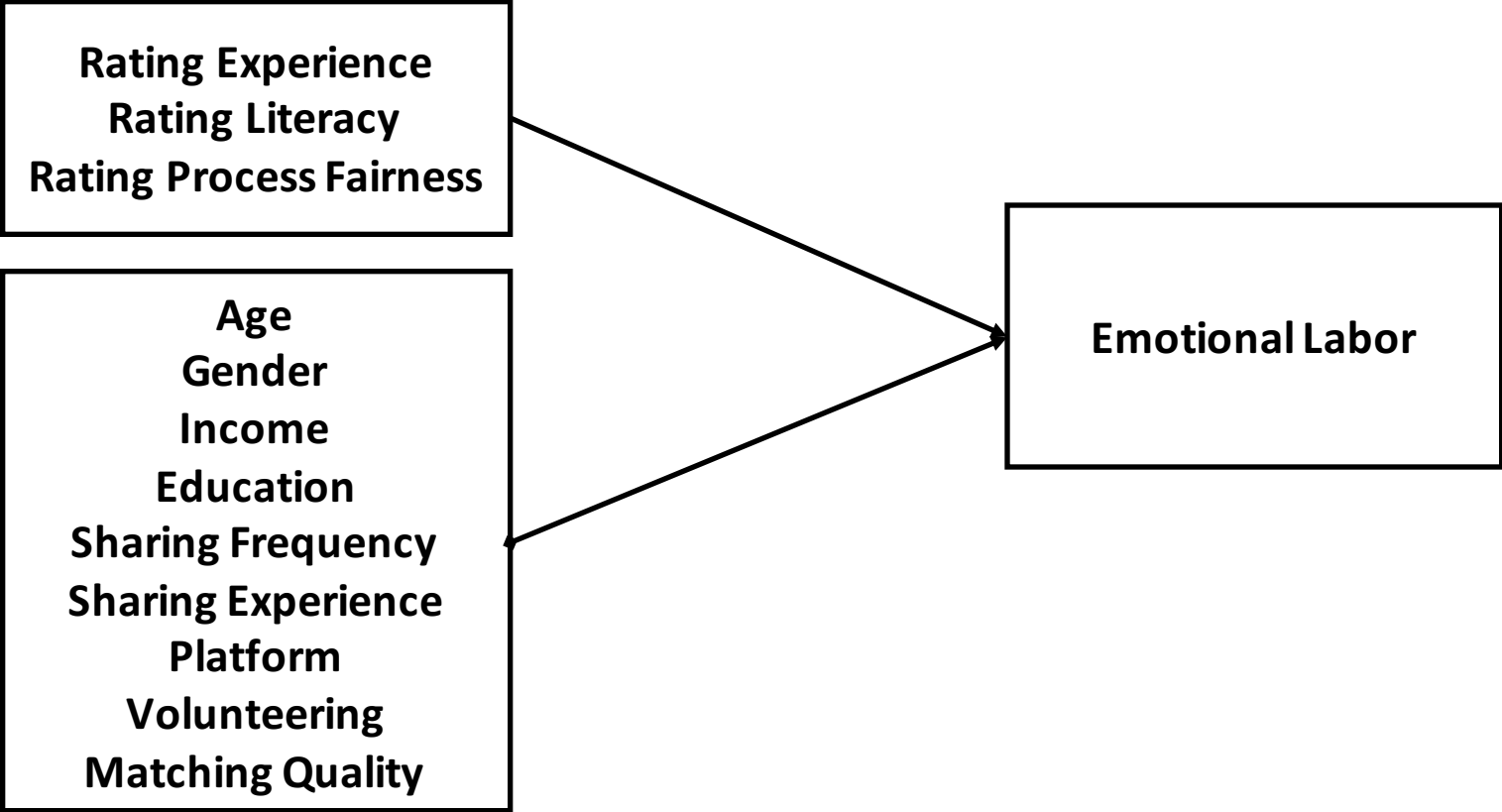
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The conditioning function of rating mechanisms for consumers in the sharing economy

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Based on paper forthcoming in a special issue of
Internet Research on the sharing economy.

Central Model Tested



*“I use the term emotional labor to mean the **management of feeling** to create a publicly observable **facial and bodily display**; emotional labor is **sold for a wage** and therefore has exchange value.”*

Arlie Hochschild, 1983

**You are bright,
resourceful, alert, cool,
collected, sociable,
reliable, bubbly,
confident and pretty.**

**That gives you
1 chance in 25
of becoming a
Delta Air Lines
stewardess.**

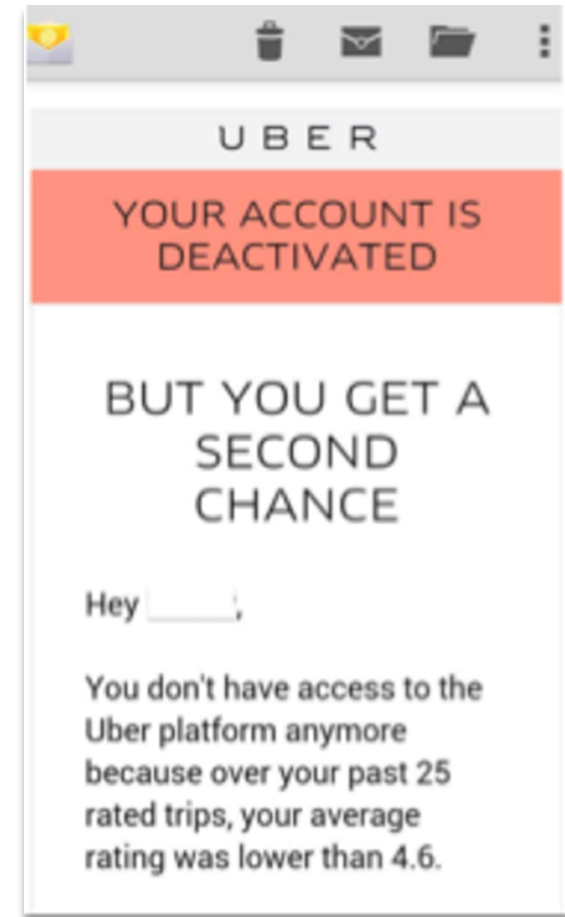
**Like Kris
Conrad.**

**Delta is ready
when you are.**



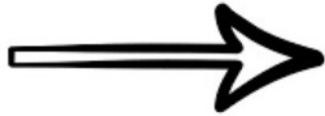
Previous Research on Emotional Labor and Ratings in the Sharing Economy

- **Uber driving** demands emotional labor from providers: *“Small talk seems to be an expected part of the Uber journey.”* (Glöss et al., 2016; Raval & Dourish, 2016)
- The design of the **Uber app**, including the rating system, acts as a conditioning force and instrument of economic control (Cockayne, 2016; Van Doorn, 2017).
- **Ratings** create a service mentality. (Horton & Golden, 2015)
- Providers with bad feedback can face **negative consequences**, up to rejection from the platform. (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016)

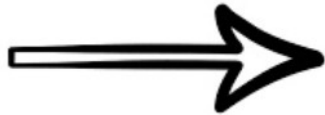


Comparison Traditional Services and Sharing Economy

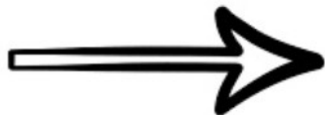
	Traditional Service Settings	Sharing Economy
Functional Dimension	Cleanliness secondary	<i>"Honour your commitments and any house rules."</i>
	Timeliness secondary	<i>"Always let your host know if you're likely to arrive late for check-in."</i>
	Wear and tear secondary	Wear and tear important
	(Avoidance of) Noise secondary	<i>"Be respectful of your neighbor."</i>
Social Dimension	Minimal friendliness	<i>"Enjoy your host's home as if you were staying with friends."</i>
	Minimal social interaction	<i>"Try asking your host about their favourite neighborhood spots!"</i>
	Minimal emotional labor	<i>"Always leave an honest review for your host to help guide future guests."</i>



How pronounced is emotional labor among consumers of sharing economy platforms?



How does the rating system affect consumers' emotional labor in the sharing economy?



How do demographic, socio-economic, and behavioral characteristics affect consumers' emotional labor in the sharing economy?

Data and Method I: Online Survey

- **Amazon Mechanical Turk** sample with 393 US-based respondents in May 2017
- **Average age** 35 years (SD 10 years)
- 4% providers (14), 55% **consumers (213)**, 41% (158) aware non-users and only one respondent non-aware non-user
- 61% male and 39% female among consumers. **Uber** (68%) and **Airbnb** (25%) dominant platforms, few Lyft drivers
- Linear regression analysis

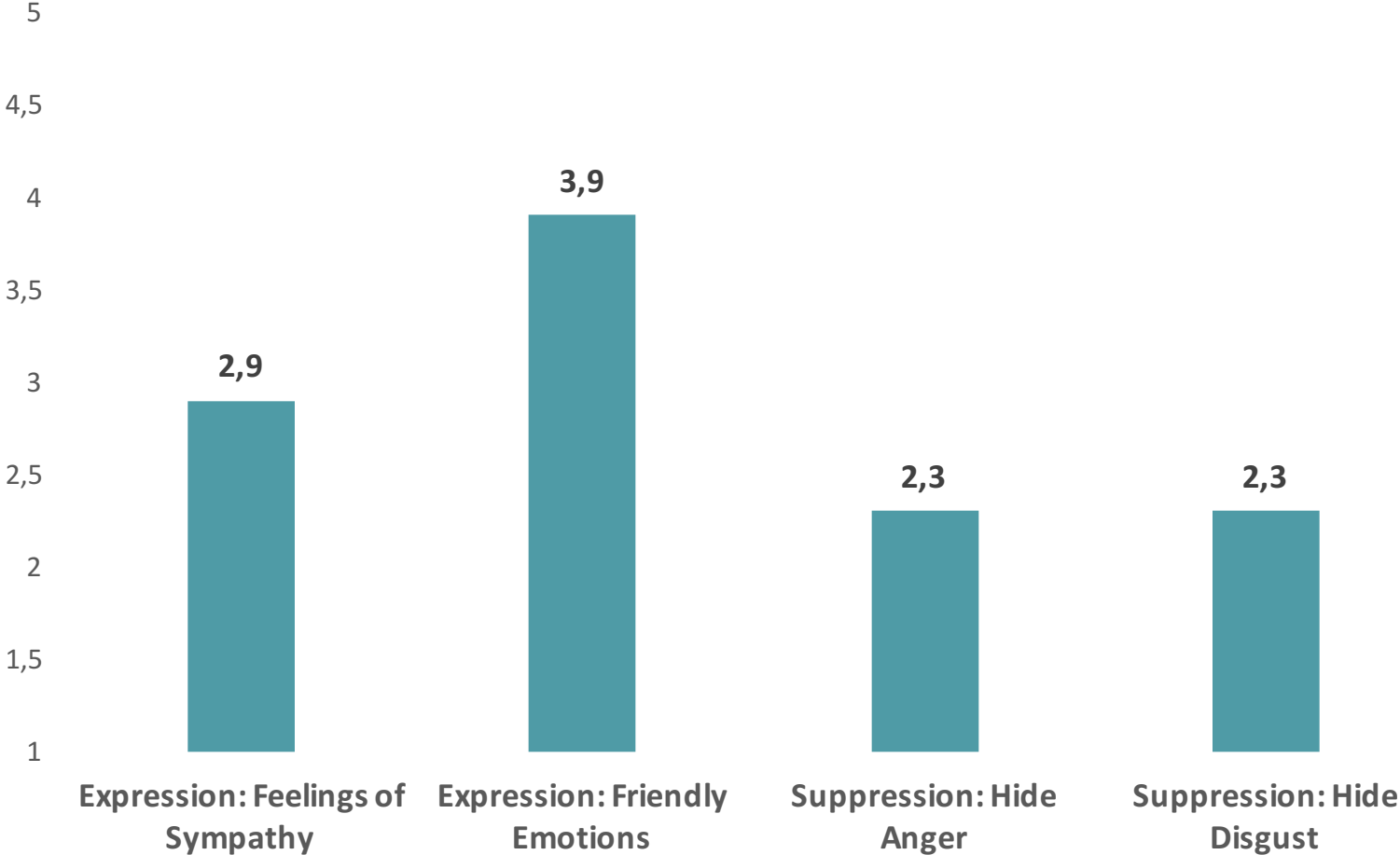


Data and Method II: Focus Groups

- **Six European countries** involved
- **18 focus groups** in total in mid 2017, with 94 participants in total
- Millenials **aged 18-35**
- Conducted in Amsterdam (5), Milano (3), Oslo (3), Leipzig (3), London (1), St. Gallen (3)
- Mostly consumers, barely providers



Results: Descriptive Statistics



Results: Expressive and Suppressive Emotional Labor

Variable	Beta
Income	-0.13*
Education (Ref. = High School)	
<i>Vocational Certificate</i>	-0.02
<i>Bachelor</i>	-0.06
<i>Master</i>	-0.09
<i>Doctorate or higher</i>	0.07 ⁺
Volunteer	0.25***
Sharing Frequency	0.15*
Service (Ref. = Airbnb)	
<i>Uber</i>	0.02
<i>Lyft</i>	0.15*
Rating Literacy	0.23**
Matching Quality	0.16*
R ²	0.38

Variable	Beta
Sharing Frequency	0.15 ⁺ (0.08)
Service (Ref. = Airbnb)	
<i>Uber</i>	0.09 (0.17)
<i>Lyft</i>	0.14 ⁺ (0.35)
Rating Experience	0.17* (0.08)
R ²	0.10

Results: Focus Groups

“What I find really annoying with Airbnb is that you have to be nice with people. I know it sounds horrible but I don't know. I guess I don't really enjoy small talk and when I go somewhere, it's just because I just want to be by myself or whatever.” (UK, female, 33, consumer)

“Yes, I think that these ratings are still central. For example, with BlaBlaCar and Airbnb in any case. That you are rated as a visitor or as a passenger. Yes, this person was on time, was nice, was orderly, left everything in a good state or so.” (Germany, female, 23, consumer)

“But now you're afraid that we'll get a bad rating, so we have to talk, we have to entertain. They're sitting there on their best behavior in the Uber and I'm just like, ‘Ah, how is your day?’” (Norway, male, 31, consumer)

Discussion and Conclusion

- **Emotional labor** is quite prevalent among sharing economy consumers.
- **Platforms** matter.
- **Rating** factors affect emotional labor.
- Consumers express **mixed to negative feelings about emotional labor** in the focus groups, making the connection to the rating system.



Through
You



@lutzid



Measures

4 items for Emotional Labor

When you interact with providers (e.g., hosts, drivers), how often do you do the following?

- *Express feelings of sympathy (expression)*
- *Express friendly emotions (expression)*
- *Hide your anger about something someone has done (suppression)*
- *Hide your disgust about something someone has done (suppression)*

4 items for negative rating experience

3 items for rating literacy

4 items for rating system fairness

6 items for matching quality

3 items for volunteering



Measurement of Independent and Control Variables

(Negative) rating experience was measured with four items: *Providers rate me arbitrarily; I often get unjustified ratings; Providers rate me too harshly; and Providers have unrealistic expectations.* (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.86$)

Rating literacy was measured with three items: *I know how the rating/review system works; I am aware of the consequences of bad ratings for providers; and I expect a professional level of service from my providers.* (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.71$)

Rating system fairness was measured with four items: *The rating/review system is fair; The rating/review system works well; The rating/review system is accurate; The rating/review system is clear.* (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$)

Matching quality was measured with six items: *The platform does a good job matching me with a provider; The platform is transparent over why I am matched with a provider; The search results/matching mechanisms make sense; I feel I have control over the matching process; I should be allowed to choose a provider based on my own criteria; and Sharing platforms are a fair and unbiased source of information.* (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.80$)